



## **Tennessee Regulatory Authority**

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**For Release:** June 18, 2001

### **TRA Selects MCI Worldcom Global Relay to Provide Relay Services in Tennessee**

**Nashville** – The Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) has awarded MCI Worldcom Global Relay the contract to provide Relay service in Tennessee. The contract will allow the nation's second largest provider of long-distance telecommunications to be the official service provider for the Tennessee Relay Center for a period of five years.

The function of Relay service is to provide assisted telephone service to persons with speech, hearing, and visual impairments. The service operates by linking conversations between individuals who use text telephones (TTYs) or telebraille (TB) devices and individuals who use standard telephones.

"Today's awarding of the contract to MCI Worldcom Global Relay signifies the TRA's continued commitment to promoting the public interest. The company has over nine years experience in the relay service industry and we are certainly pleased to have awarded the contract to such an experienced provider," says Eddie Roberson, Chief of the TRA's Consumer Services Division.

Invitations to bid on the Relay service contract were extended to all of the state's telecommunications service providers on a competitively neutral basis. The criteria used to select a service provider included the company's qualifications and prior experience in providing relay service, the technical approach to be utilized by the provider in deploying relay service, and the cost to provide such services.

The Tennessee Relay Center has been in operation in Tennessee since 1990. The center handles an average of 75,000 consumer calls monthly, providing assistance to the state's hearing impaired and deaf citizens. MCI Worldcom Global Relay will begin providing service on September 25, 2001.

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